

**EVALUATION OF CALIFORNIA'S AFTER SCHOOL
LEARNING AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM:
1999-2001**

Preliminary Report

**Department of Education
University of California at Irvine**

In cooperation with:

**Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office,
California Department of Education**

February 1, 2002

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
Introduction	1
Statewide Evaluation Findings.....	4
Achievement Data: Reading.....	4
Achievement Data: Math	6
Attendance Data: Regular School Day.....	7
Interpretation of Statewide Findings	8
ASLSNPP Evaluations with Research-Based Designs.....	9
Matched Pair Comparison Group Evaluations.....	9
Longitudinal Evaluation of <i>LA's BEST</i>	17
Findings from Local Evaluation Reports, 2000-2001	20
Study Examining Grade Retention and Cost Savings	26
The Cost-Effectiveness of the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program.....	32
Findings from Surveys of Students, Parents, Teachers, and Administrators	34
Summary	38
Appendices.....	39
Appendix A: Findings from Local Evaluation Reports, 1999-2000.....	40
Appendix B: List of Grantees Included in Evaluation Report	42

Special thanks go to the many organizations and individuals who provided data for this report. The report was prepared by Joan S. Bissell, Ed.D., Vice Chair, Department of Education, University of California, Irvine (UCI) in cooperation with John Malloy, evaluation specialist in the Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office, California Department of Education. Assistance was provided by Anne Johnson and Peter Jones, Ed.D. students at UCI, in the study of retention. Support for preparation of the report was provided by the Foundation Consortium.

**EVALUATION OF CALIFORNIA'S AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING AND
SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM: 1999-2001
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

February 1, 2002

**Department of Education, University of California at Irvine
In cooperation with
Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office
California Department of Education**

This report is a summary of the findings of statewide and local evaluations of the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (ASLSNPP). Outcome data show a consistent pattern of positive results on student achievement, attendance, behavior, and reductions in grade retention. State and local evaluations of the ASLSNPP demonstrate:

- Positive impacts on participating students' achievement as measured by (a) SAT-9 Reading and Math test scores, with the most marked changes statewide in Reading, and (b) improved student grade point averages as reported by local programs.
- Especially large improvements in achievement among the most high-risk students, including those initially in the lowest quartile on standardized test scores and English Language Learners.
- Improved student regular day attendance, with some evaluations showing particularly large improvements for students having the highest absences prior to participating in the program.
- The largest gains in attendance and achievement typically among students who participated at the highest level, referred to as "higher dosage" participants.
- A direct relationship in some programs between improved attendance and improved achievement.
- More positive attitudes among participating students toward school, enhanced confidence about learning, and increased educational aspirations.
- Improved social skills and behavior, reduced disciplinary incidents at school, and reduced suspensions among participating students.
- Improved feelings of safety among participating children and youth and increased confidence among parents concerning their children's safety.
- Very high levels of support for the program among children and youth, parents, teachers, school administrators, and community members.

In addition, the evaluations show substantial cost savings associated with the ASLSNPP as a result of reductions in grade repetitions. At every grade from kindergarten through 8th, the program is associated with a decrease in the number of

students retained in grade. In the primary grades, there is a 53.4% decrease in grade retention associated with the program. Savings to the State related to reduced grade repetition, based on per pupil funding and the proposed expansion in the Governor's Budget for 2002-2003,¹ are projected to exceed \$20 million annually. Savings in 2001-2002 are projected at more than \$11 million. Additional savings related to reduced juvenile crime have been reported by local programs and law enforcement agencies.

The evaluations also show that the program is highly cost-effective. It is one of the lowest-cost academic interventions in California, costing the State \$1.67 per student hour of participation. A primary reason for the low cost of the ASLSNPP is the statutory requirement that every \$2 in State funding for the program be matched locally by \$1 in other funding or in-kind resources. Matching funds to support the program are provided by school districts, cities, counties, community-based organizations, businesses, and foundations. Programs also have large contributed resources through volunteers—AmeriCorps workers, college students preparing to be teachers, senior citizens, and community members. The result is that most programs maintain higher adult-child ratios than the required 1:20 and are able to provide considerable one-to-one student help in tutoring and homework assistance. Additional contributions include the services of parks and recreation departments, libraries, museums, arts centers, and service organizations. Programs are coordinated with school operations, with schools remaining open and providing staff, space, facilities, computer labs, and libraries.

Quality services and economies are also achieved through close collaboration with community organizations. ASLSNPP programs are offered jointly by school districts and Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, prominent youth organizations such as Beacons, and community-based organizations. California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California campuses provide significant support to ASLSNPP programs, with many of their students engaged in service learning, and their outreach activities coordinated with local programs.

Programs are now in their second or third year of operation and have developed significant capacity. Many have waiting lists of eligible children, and it is estimated that more than 100,000 children and youth are currently ready to be served. Programs across the State have prepared to serve additional students and can readily accommodate the expansion, from services to 97,000 to 176,000 children and youth, proposed in the Governor's Budget. The evaluation findings make clear the importance of providing services to these additional students. The ASLSNPP, which has become the Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (B/ASLSNPP), has shown since its inception its ability to prevent student failure and increase the safety of children and youth. The cost savings associated with it are

¹ The Governor's Budget for 2002-2003 proposes expanding funding for the program by \$75 million (from \$87.8 million to \$162.8 million), allowing for services to 176,000 children and youth, an increase of 79,000.

substantial, making its expansion one of the soundest educational investments that can be made by the State of California.

**EVALUATION OF CALIFORNIA'S AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING
AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM**
February 1, 2002

Department of Education, University of California at Irvine
In cooperation with
Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office
California Department of Education

Introduction

California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (ASLSNPP), enacted in 1998, funded the establishment of local after school education and enrichment programs. Local programs involve partnerships between schools and communities that provide literacy and academic enrichment support and safe, constructive alternatives for students in kindergarten through ninth grade.² Recent legislation (Chapter 545, Statutes of 2001, Assembly Bill 6-Cardenas) expanded the scope of the program, creating the Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (B/ASLSNPP).

Priority for funding programs is given to elementary, middle, and junior high schools where a minimum of 50 percent of the pupils are eligible for free or reduced cost meals through the National School Lunch Program operated by the United States Department of Agriculture. Free or reduced cost meal eligibility is based upon poverty, and this targets the ASLSNPP to the State's most economically disadvantaged students.

Programs are required to contain two components:

- An educational and literacy component that includes tutoring and/or homework assistance, and
- An educational enrichment component that may include a wide range of youth development, recreation, and prevention activities.

Under the ASLSNPP, programs must operate for a minimum of 3 hours per day, until at least 6:00 p.m. All staff members who directly supervise pupils must meet the minimum qualifications of an instructional aide in the school district.

In 1999, \$50 million in funding was awarded to 100 grantees throughout the state; an additional \$37.8 million was awarded to 57 additional grantees in 2000, bringing total funding to \$87.8 million. Local match (cash or in-kind) from the school district, governmental agencies, community organizations, the private sector or other sources is required in an amount equal to 50 percent of the State grant amount. Approximately 97,000 children and youth were able to be served in 2000-2001 with this level of funding. The Governor's Budget for 2002-2003 proposes expansion of the program by

² This description is taken from the California Department of Education's *After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program Fact Sheet*.

\$75 million, allowing the program to serve a total of approximately 176,000 children and youth.

ASLSNPPs have been required to collect annual outcome data and conduct local evaluations annually. The outcome data must include specified measures of academic performance, attendance, and positive behavioral changes, which are aggregated at the state level. A number of studies of the ASLSNPP have been conducted in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. This reflects not only the evaluation requirements within the enabling legislation but also the priority placed on evaluation by the California Department of Education (CDE) Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office. It also reflects the strong commitment to evaluation by the Partnership between the CDE and the Foundation Consortium—a unique collaboration providing governance and support for the program.

Evaluations of the ASLSNPP and the local programs funded by it have included:

- Statewide evaluations in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 examining improvements in students' (a) achievement in Reading and Math (based on standardized test scores), (b) regular day attendance, and (c) behavior.
- Research-based evaluation studies conducted by University and other external evaluators, including:
 - Studies using a matched pair comparison group research design which examine participants and matched non-participants at the same school.
 - Studies using longitudinal research methods which examine the performance of participants and non-participants from the beginning point in the program and over a multi-year period.
- In addition, a study was conducted during 2000-2001 by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, concerning rates of grade retention among ASLSNPP participants and non-participants at their school sites.
- Local ASLSNPP evaluations that provide data for the statewide evaluation and additional information regarding: (a) students' behavioral changes; (b) program staffing and staff development; (c) integration between the program and the regular school program; (d) partners in the program and their contributions; (e) reimbursements for snacks; and (f) the characteristics of the program and the ways it has developed over time.

The statewide and local evaluations of the ASLSNPP in both 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 demonstrated a range of positive effects and are consistent with studies of elementary after school programs conducted over the past decade across the nation. The California evaluations are distinctive, however, in that they show patterns of positive impacts

among middle school students.³ In both grade spans, improvements often increase with additional length of participation—a phenomenon that has been named the “dosage” effect.

Evaluations of the ASLSNPP have demonstrated particularly large impacts among English Language Learners and among students initially in the lowest quartile on standardized achievement tests. In addition, the studies have shown sizable reductions in grade retention associated with the program, resulting in cost-savings to the State.⁴ Evaluations demonstrate major contributed resources, resulting in a program that requires relatively low State per pupil expenditure and is unusually cost-effective.

This report summarizes findings from each of the major evaluations of the ASLSNPP program. The information included is from programs reflecting the geographic, racial-ethnic, and urban-rural diversity of the ASLSNPP program statewide.

The programs included in the evaluations are as follow:

- Statewide evaluations—all funded ASLSNPP programs.
- Required local evaluations—24 randomly chosen grantees (most school districts) that represent a diverse group of programs from across the state.
- Matched pair comparison group evaluations—three studies, two of programs managed by the Los Angeles School District’s *Beyond the Bell* unit, and one of the Santa Ana Unified School District’s ASLSNPP program.
- Longitudinal evaluation—a comprehensive, decade-long study of *LA’s BEST*.
- Study of grade retention—20 school districts geographically representative of programs throughout the State.

The report’s several components include data from evaluations of more than 50 grantees in 22 counties serving more than 75% of the students in the ASLSNPP. As a result, the findings provide a representative picture of the statewide impacts of the program.

³ There are relatively few studies of middle school after school programs nationally.

⁴ Based on services to 176,000 students in 2002-2003 and California’s per pupil funding, estimated annual savings associated with reduced grade repetition are projected to exceed \$20 million.

STATEWIDE EVALUATION FINDINGS

Statewide evaluation findings for the ASLSNPP during 2000-2001 are summarized below. As in 1999-2000, the findings show substantial gains among program participants on SAT-9 Reading and Math scores, with especially large improvements in Reading. At all levels of participation (ranging from 60 days or less to more than 150 days), substantial improvements were found on SAT-9 Reading scores. In the case of SAT-9 Math scores, substantial improvements were found among students at all levels of participation greater than 60 days. Gains in both Reading and Math were greater than statewide averages during 2000-2001. Improvements in attendance during 1999-2000 were sustained during 2000-2001, with average regular day school attendance rates of approximately 96% for students in the program.

Achievement Data: Reading

One of the most useful approaches for analyzing SAT-9 scores in evaluating the ASLSNPP is to examine the number of students who scored above and below the lowest quartile—the 25th percentile—based on national norms.⁵ As shown in Table 1, the percent of ASLSNPP students who scored above the 25th percentile on Reading scores in Spring 2000 was 56.6%. The percent who scored above the 25th percentile in Spring 2001 was 60.8%. This reflects an absolute increase of 4.2% in students above the lowest quartile. This increase is *more than twice* the increase found among all students statewide (1.9%) and indicates that ASLSNPP participants are experiencing improvements in Reading that are instrumental to their educational success.

Table 1. Improvement of After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program Participants on SAT -9 Reading Scores: 2000-2001				
Days in ASLSNPP	Spring 2000 Above 25%tile	Spring 2001 Above 25%tile	Increase in Students Above 25%tile	% Increase in Students Above 25%tile
>150	57.0%	59.8%	2.8%	5.0%
121-150	55.6%	58.7%	3.1%	5.6%
91-120	53.1%	58.6%	5.5%	10.4%
61-90	55.0%	60.5%	4.5%	10.0%
≤60	58.6%	62.9%	4.3%	7.3%
Unknown	54.5%	57.9%	3.4%	6.2%
All ASLSNPP	56.6%	60.8%	4.2%	7.3%
Statewide	69.1%	71.0%	1.9%	2.7%

The statewide findings indicate that students who participated in the program at all levels benefited substantially in Reading. Increases in students scoring above the 25th percentile ranged from 2.8% to 5.5% for different levels of participation. Among all groups, the percent of students moving out of the bottom quartile was larger than found statewide (1.9%).

⁵ If 75% of students score above the 25th percentile, the average national distribution among students from all income categories on this part of the scale is mirrored.

Closing of the gap in Reading scores between ASLSNPP participants and other students in California is seen in the evaluation findings. In Spring 2000, 12.5% fewer ASLSNPP participants were above the 25th percentile than was found among students statewide (56.6% vs. 69.1%). By Spring 2001, the difference in students above the bottom quartile was reduced to 10.2% (60.8% vs. 71.0%). This represents a sizable increase in ASLSNPP students scoring above the lowest quartile in reading (60.8% vs. 56.5%) and an important reduction (2.3%) in the gap between the two groups.

In interpreting these data, it is important to look at the two-year pattern of performance among students in the ASLSNPP. The baseline data (Spring 2000) for the evaluation of 2001 outcomes may reflect, for programs in operation before 2000, the effects of gains made during 1999-2000. It is necessary to look at the data for both 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 to understand changes in achievement associated with the ASLSNPP. Doing so demonstrates a pattern of continuous gains between 1999 and 2001.

Results for the two years of program operation are presented in Table 2. Data for 1999-2000 are provided for Cohort 1 (the first ASLSNPP grantees) and data for 2000-2001 are for both Cohorts 1 and 2, including the second group of ASLSNPP grantees. Large increases in SAT-9 Reading scores are seen in both years. In 1999-2000, increases in students scoring above the bottom quartile were substantially larger than those found statewide⁶ and, as noted above, the increase in 2000-2001 was *more than twice as large* as found statewide.⁷ Scores on the SAT-9 Reading test demonstrate a pattern of continuous and educationally significant improvement.

Table 2. After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program SAT -9 Reading Scores: 1999-2001				
	1999 Above 25%tile	2000 Above 25%tile	2000 Above 25%tile	2001 Above 25%tile
Days in ASLSNPP	ASLSNPP Cohort 1	ASLSNPP Cohort 1	ASLSNPP Cohorts 1 and 2	ASLSNPP Cohorts 1 and 2
>150	45.3%	53.8%	57.0%	59.8%
121-150	47.7%	54.4%	55.6%	58.7%
91-120	47.0%	54.0%	53.1%	58.6%
61-90	45.0%	52.0%	55.0%	60.5%
≤60	37.4%	45.7%	58.6%	62.9%
Unknown	50.0%	43.5%	54.5%	57.9%
All ASLSNPP	42.6%	48.4%	56.6%	60.8%
Statewide	65.6%	69.1%	69.1%	71.0%

⁶ The increase in ASLSNPP participants scoring above the 25th percentile in Reading between Spring 1999 and Spring 2000 was 5.8% (42.6% vs. 48.4%). Statewide, there was a 3.5% increase (from 65.6% to 69.1%) in students scoring above the 25th percentile between Spring 1999 and Spring 2000.

Bissell, J. and Malloy, J. (2001). *Evaluation of California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2000*. University of California at Irvine Department of Education in cooperation with Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office, California Department of Education.

⁷ The increase in ASLSNPP participants scoring above the 25th percentile in Reading in 2000-2001 was 4.2% and the statewide increase was 1.9%.

Achievement Data: Math

Increases were found among ASLSNPP students on SAT-9 Math scores in 2000-2001, and were particularly large among those who participated for the longest period of time. As demonstrated in Table 3, the percent of students in the ASLSNPP moving out of the bottom quartile in Math was substantial (2.5%) and higher than that found statewide (1.9%). At the baseline time of Spring 2000, 64.4% of students scored above the 25th percentile on the SAT-9 Math test. The remainder, 35.6% of ASLSNPP students, were in the high-risk category of the bottom quartile. At the end of 2001, 66.9% of participants scored above the 25th percentile, an increase of 2.5%. Among students who participated for more than 150 days (approximately 7.5 months), there was an increase of 4.9% in students above the 25th percentile, an increase considerably larger than that found statewide. *The scores suggest that, particularly for students who participate in the ASLSNPP for substantial periods of time, there is a closing of the gap in Math achievement between low-income and other students.*

Table 3. Improvement of After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program Participants on SAT -9 Math Scores: 2000-2001				
Days in ASLSNPP	2000 Above 25%tile	2001 Above 25%tile	Increase in Students Above 25%tile	% Increase in Students Above 25%tile
>150	64.9%	69.8%	4.9%	7.5%
121-150	64.3%	66.8%	2.5%	3.9%
91-120	63.7%	66.7%	3.0%	4.7%
61-90	64.7%	68.5%	3.8%	5.8%
≤60	64.3%	64.3%	0%	0%
Unknown	63.8%	65.1%	1.3%	2.0%
All ASLSNPP	64.4%	66.9%	2.5%	3.8%
Statewide	72.7%	74.6%	1.9%	2.6%

SAT-9 Math scores for the two-year period from 1999 to 2001 show, as was found for SAT-9 Reading scores, a continued pattern of improved performance over time. Table 4 below presents initial and end-of-program SAT-9 Math scores for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. The increase in 1999-2000 among ASLSNPP participants scoring above the 25th percentile was 4.1%, close to the improvement found statewide (4.5%).⁸ In 2000-2001, the gain among the ASLSNPP participants was 2.5%, exceeding the statewide gain (1.9%). The increase in scores above the 25th percentile for students attending the program more than 150 days in 1999-2000 were substantially larger than those found statewide,⁹ and increases among this category of high dosage participants in 2000-2001 were more than twice as large as those found statewide (4.9% vs. 1.9%).¹⁰

⁸ The gains among ASLSNPP participants was from 54.4% to to 58.5% (4.1%) and among students statewide was from 68.2% to 72.7% (4.5%).

⁹ The increase among ASLSNPP students participating more than 150 days in 1999-2000 was 7.4% (from 56.7% to 64.1%) and the increase among students statewide was 4.5% (from 68.2% to 72.7%).

¹⁰ The increase in ASLSNPP students with Math scores above the 25th percentile among those participating in the program more than 150 days in 2000-2001 was 4.9% (from 64.9% to 69.8%). The increase statewide in students with Math scores above the 25th percentile was 1.9% (from 72.7% to 74.6%).

Table 4. After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program SAT -9 Math Scores: 1999-2001				
	1999 Above 25%tile	2000 Above 25%tile	2000 Above 25%tile	2001 Above 25%tile
Days in ASLSNPP	ASLSNPP Cohort 1	ASLSNPP Cohort 1	ASLSNPP Cohorts 1 and 2	ASLSNPP Cohorts 1 and 2
>150	56.7%	64.1%	64.9%	69.8%
121-150	57.1%	62.8%	64.3%	66.8%
91-120	57.7%	63.7%	63.7%	66.7%
61-90	55.5%	61.7%	64.7%	68.5%
≤60	47.9%	52.2%	64.3%	64.3%
Unknown	61.3%	61.2%	63.8%	65.1%
All ASLSNPP	54.4%	58.5%	64.4%	66.9%
Statewide	68.2%	72.7%	72.7%	74.6%

Attendance Data: Regular School Day

The regular school day attendance of students in the ASLSNPP increased between 1999 and 2000 and remained stable in 2000-2001. School attendance of program participants increased by 1% in 1999-2000 from 95% to 96% and continued at this level during 2000-2001, as seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Regular Day Attendance of After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program Participants: 1999-2001				
	ASLSNPP Cohort 1	ASLSNPP Cohort 1	ASLSNPP Cohorts 1 and 2	ASLSNPP Cohorts 1 and 2
	% of Days Attended 1999	% of Days Attended 2000	% of Days Attended 2000	% of Days Attended 2001
All ASLSNPP Participants	95%	96%	96%	96%

Interpretation of Statewide Achievement Findings

The positive findings for the ASLSNPP on student achievement can be explained by a number of factors, including expanded opportunities for learning among participating children and youth. One of the most significant determinants of school performance is the time students are engaged in academic learning.¹¹ Students in the ASLSNPP experience increased academic learning time through after school program activities. These include homework assistance, tutoring, and other education, literacy, and enrichment activities.

¹¹ Berliner, D. (1990). *What's All the Fuss About Instructional Time? The Nature of Time in Schools: Theoretical Concepts, Practitioner Perceptions*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

ASLSNPP students often receive individualized assistance needed to improve their achievement in Reading, Math, and other subjects. The academic assistance they receive in literacy and Math is reflected in consistent gains in both areas. Reading and Math scores show improvements among students at most levels of program participation. In many cases, a relationship is found between the amount of time students participate in the program (dosage) and increased achievement. Gains are larger than those found statewide, and the result is a closing of the gap between these students from low-income communities and other students statewide.

ASLSNPP EVALUATIONS WITH RESEARCH-BASED DESIGNS

Matched Pair Comparison Group Evaluations

Evaluations that use matched pair comparison groups allow for the most accurate assessment of the impacts of the ASLSNPP. In these evaluations, the changes in performance of students in the program are compared with changes among similar students who are not in the program. This provides information on what occurs among students in the program and among those at-risk students who do not participate in it. Some studies compare changes in the performance of participants with that of the local school population at large. While the information is useful, the differences between the two groups are difficult to interpret. Students in the ASLSNPP are typically more economically disadvantaged and at higher risk of failure than students in the school overall. Matched comparison group studies identify patterns of performance experienced by these high-risk students in the absence of the program. These studies yield conclusions about the ways in which the program does or does not serve to overcome potential failures and foster success. The three evaluations of ASLSNPP programs that have used rigorous matched pair comparison group designs are summarized below.¹²

Santa Ana Unified School District: Matched Pair Comparison Group Evaluation of Four Middle School Programs

Santa Ana Unified School District undertook a matched pair comparison group evaluation of its four ASLSNPP middle school sites in 1999-2000.¹³ Matches were based upon initial grade point average, Limited-English Proficiency rating, free or reduced cost meals eligibility, ethnicity, gender, grade level, and classroom teacher. The study included 1,236 students in the matched pair analyses, 618 of whom were program participants and 618 of whom were matched comparison students.

A comparison of the program participants and the general school population demonstrated that a significantly greater percentage of participants were Limited-English Proficient (71% versus 60%). Participants were also significantly more likely to be eligible for the federal free or reduced cost meals program than the overall school population (85% versus 73%). These differences, typically found in ASLSNPP studies, demonstrate the efforts made by schools to encourage participation among the most needy students.

The matched comparison group evaluation included analyses of two-way and three-way interactions to determine outcomes among different groups of participants (e.g., higher

¹² These are the only such studies that have been completed to date. The David and Lucille Packard Foundation is supporting a 3-year matched pair longitudinal evaluation, currently in progress, of ASLSNPP elementary programs. Support for this study was also provided by the California Department of Education through its ASLSNPP administrative budget.

¹³ Prenovost, J. (2001). *A First-Year Evaluation of After School Learning Programs in Four Urban Middle Schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District*. Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Administration, University of California, Irvine and Los Angeles.

dosage Limited-English Proficient students, higher dosage male participants in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade). Students were classified into higher or lower dosage groups, the cut-point being the median number of days attended, which was 35 (almost 2 months). Participating students who attended more than the median were classified as higher dosage participants; the remaining participants were classified as lower dosage participants.

Participation in the program was associated with higher SAT-9 Reading and Math improvement scores for ASLSNPP participants than for matched comparison students. Overall effects on SAT-9 Reading mean scores were positive, and at three of the four sites there were significant impacts found among students who participated at a high level. In addition, Limited-English Proficient participants had higher mean SAT-9 Reading improvement scores than matched pair comparison students. SAT-9 Math improvement scores were significantly larger for higher dosage Limited-English Proficient participants than for their matches, as is shown in Table 6. These findings are striking in view of the fact that the programs began in the second half of the year and the average number of days students participated was 56.46.

Table 6. Spring 2000 SAT -9 Math Improvement Scores for Limited-English Proficient Students*		
Group	M	SD
Higher Dosage	2.50 [†]	13.60
Lower Dosage	2.93	13.99
Non-Participant Matches	1.79	14.06

*N=200 higher dosage participants, 201 lower dosage participants, and 606 non-participant matches.

[†]p≤.089 when comparing higher dosage participants to their matches.

Comparisons between higher dosage participants and non-participant matches yielded a consistent pattern that helped to explain the impacts of these middle school ASLSNPP programs. Higher dosage participants demonstrate large improvements, while *non-participant matches frequently demonstrate declines in performance*. SAT-9 Math improvement scores at one site are shown in Table 7 below to illustrate the pattern. Higher dosage participants had the largest gain (3.65 percentage points), lower dosage participants a very slight gain (.348 percentage points), while non-participant matches declined in performance (-.57 percentage points). The differences between higher dosage participants and their matches were statistically significant at the .048 level.

Table 7. Spring 2000 SAT -9 Math Improvement Scores for Sixth Graders at ASLSNPP Site*		
Group	Mean	SD
Higher Dosage	3.65 [†]	9.74
Lower Dosage	.348	9.79
Non-Participant Matches	-.57	11.83

*N=40 higher dosage participants, 23 lower dosage participants, and 82 non-participant matches.

[†]p≤.048 when comparing higher dosage participants to their matches.

ASLSNPP participants had greater gains in attendance from 1999-2000 to 2000-2001 than the matched comparison group of non-participants. Students who participated in the ASLSNPP at a higher dosage improved in their regular day attendance more than lower dosage participants and matched comparison students and, as shown in Table 8, the differences were statistically significant.

Table 8. Improvement in Mean Days Absent for Santa Ana Programs*		
Group	Mean	SD
Higher Dosage	1.36 [†]	6.47
Lower Dosage	.37	7.93
Non-Participant Matches	.32	6.81

*N=271 higher dosage participants, 288 lower dosage participants, and 796 non-participant matches.

[†]p≤.075 when higher dosage participants are compared to lower dosage participants and p≤.031 when higher dosage participants are compared to the matches.

Higher dosage Limited-English Proficient students also missed fewer days of school (5.06) in 2000-2001 than lower dosage LEP students (7.34) and matches (6.85), and the differences were statistically significant. Differences in the mean improvement in days absent were also statistically significant, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Mean Improvement in Days Absent for Limited-English Proficient Students, 2000		
Group	Mean	SD
Higher Dosage	1.62 [†]	6.33
Lower Dosage	.29	8.53
Non-Participant Matches	-.18	8.37

*N=200 higher dosage participants, 201 lower dosage participants, and 606 non-participant matches.

[†]p≤.02 when comparing higher dosage participants to lower dosage participants and p≤.05 when comparing higher dosage participant to lower dosage participants and matches.

Again, the data provide important insights regarding the positive effects of the ASLSNPP program by showing what occurs among non-participants during the middle grades. The pattern is illustrated in the data on improvements in attendance for Limited-English Proficient students. Higher dosage participants improved in their attendance, on the average, 1.62 days, lower dosage participants remained approximately the same, and *non-participant matches decreased in attendance—that is, had greater absences as they progressed through the middle grades.*

Los Angeles Unified School District: Matched Pair Comparison Group Evaluation of Programs Operated by Four Agencies

Los Angeles Unified School District requires rigorous studies comparing program participants with matched control or comparison groups in order to provide evidence of effectiveness of contracted educational services. Evaluations described below conform with LAUSD's Program Evaluation and Research Branch criteria for judging program effectiveness.

Currently, there are ASLSNPP programs operating at more than 80 sites in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). A matched pair control group study was undertaken¹⁴ that included programs operated by four of the agencies with which LAUSD contracts under *Beyond the Bell*, the District's comprehensive after school initiative. The agencies were *A World Fit for Kids* (1 middle school site), *Building Up L.A.* (3 middle school sites), *KYDS—Keep Youth Doing Something* (1 elementary and 1 middle school site), and the *City of San Fernando* (2 elementary school sites). These are community agencies that, in addition to *LA's BEST*, provide services in LAUSD under the ASLSNPP.

The evaluation design for these programs matched ASLSNPP participants with comparison students based on baseline SAT-9 Reading scores, language proficiency, free or reduced cost meals program eligibility, ethnicity, gender, grade level, and baseline English teacher. The evaluation included 1,028 students, half of whom were ASLSNPP participants and half of whom were matched pair comparison students. At the elementary level, 90% of the program participants were in the free or reduced cost meals program and 53% were English Language Learners. At the middle school level, 91% of program participants were in the free or reduced cost meals program and 49% were English Language Learners.

Areas examined in the evaluation included student outcomes related to achievement, attendance, and behavior. SAT-9 Reading and Math scores were used to assess achievement gains. It was found that ASLSNPP participants in all of the agencies' programs demonstrated increases in Reading and Math scores. At one agency, statistically significant differences in SAT-9 Math scores were found favoring students initially in the lowest quartile and among English Language Learners. In the area of attendance, subgroups of students in the various programs demonstrated improvements. For example, in one agency statistically significant differences favoring participants who were English Language Learners over the matched pair comparison students were found. In another agency statistically significant differences in suspensions favoring participants over comparison students were found. *In the case of attendance and suspensions, while participants typically showed improvements, non-participating control groups showed the opposite—decreases in attendance and increases in suspensions.*

Examples of Findings

Overall effects that were statistically significant were not found in this evaluation, but significant positive effects were found for particular agencies and among subgroups of participants in them. This is consistent with the pattern of differential effects found in Santa Ana, suggesting that program effects are influenced by student characteristics and participation factors (e.g., dosage, etc.). Three examples of positive impacts found in the evaluation are given below.

¹⁴ Bissell, J., Ashurst, J. and Jones, P. (2001). *Los Angeles Unified School District After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: An Evaluation of Four Agencies and Supplemental Report*. Irvine, CA: University of California, Irvine Department of Education and Research Support Services.

A World Fit for Kids

A World Fit for Kids had a significant impact in improving scores among two particularly low-performing middle school populations. Statistically significant differences between ASLSNPP participants and matched comparison students were found on SAT-9 Math scores (a) for those students scoring in the lowest Reading quartile, a group that represented more than 30% of the students in the middle school program operated by the agency, and (b) for English Language Learners.

Differences among students in the lowest Reading quartile are seen by comparing changes for the participants and comparison students. Data are reported for SAT-9 scores in Normal Curve Equivalents (NCEs). *On average, poor readers not participating in the program (the comparison group) had a decline in their SAT-9 Math score from the baseline to the end of the program year, while participants in the program had a gain of five points. The difference between change scores for the two groups was statistically significant. The scores at the end of the program year were significantly higher than the scores obtained at baseline for program participants.*

Evidence of program impacts is also seen for the group of students classified as English Language Learners. On average, the improvement in SAT-9 Math scores for English Language Learners participating in the program was 4.05 points. In contrast, *the mean decline for comparison group students who were English Language Learners was -2.62 points.* This difference was statistically significant.

Table 10. Group Comparisons of Change in SAT -9 Math Scores For Low-Performing Populations Served by <i>A World Fit for Kids</i>*						
Sub-Population	Group	Baseline Mean	Follow-up Mean	Mean Change	t [†]	Sig.
Lowest Reading Quartile	Comparison	34.7	33.7	-1.0	2.43	.019
	Participant	28.3	33.4	5.1 [‡]		
English Language Learner	Comparison	40.0	37.4	-2.6	2.17	.038
	Participant	34.9	38.9	4.1		

*N=44 participants and 35 comparison students.

[†]Independent Sample t-test comparing the two groups in the amount of change.

[‡]Pre-post change was also significant for the participants: t=2.45, p<.023.

KYDS—Keep Youth Doing Something

The *KYDS—Keep Youth Doing Something* program included two sites, one at an elementary school and one at a middle school. Significant improvements were found in days absent among the English Language Learner population. These results are presented in Table 11. The results show that *while the number of absences for the comparison group students increased by more than 8 days, the number of days absent for participants decreased by nearly two days. The difference between the change for the comparison group and participants was statistically significant. The increase of 8.6 days absent for the comparison group was also statistically significant.*

Table 11. Group Comparisons of Changes in Days Absent for English Language Learners Served by KYDS–Keep Youth Doing Something*					
Group	Baseline Mean	Follow- up Mean	Mean Change	z [†]	Sig.
Comparison	6.0	14.6	8.6 [‡]		
Participant	8.4	6.7	-1.7	2.60	.008

*N=62 participants and 62 control students.

[†]Z statistic from Mann-Whitney U test was employed to compare the two groups.

[‡]The increase in number of days absent was statistically significant for the comparison group and was determined using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test (Z=2.37, p<.018).

Building Up LA

Another noteworthy finding was the statistically significant difference in suspensions found in the largest site operated by the *Building Up LA* program—Maclay Middle School, a school serving more than 165 students in the ASLSNPP. For students in the comparison group, the rate of suspensions in the baseline year was .04 (i.e., 4 suspensions for every hundred students in the program), and climbed to .16 during the study year. *That is, the suspension rate quadrupled during the study year among non-participants*, and resulted in a mean increase of .12 in the rate of suspensions. This increase was statistically significant. The mean number of suspensions for the participant group dropped from .07 to .04. A comparison of the change in the mean number of suspensions showed a significant difference between the two groups.

Table 12. Group Comparisons of Changes in Number of Suspensions At Maclay School Served by <i>Building Up LA</i>*					
Group	Baseline Mean	Follow- up Mean	Mean Change	z [†]	Sig.
Comparison	.04	.16	.12 [‡]		
Participant	.07	.04	.03	2.79	.005

*N=110 participants and 110 control students

[†]Z statistic from Mann-Whitney U test was employed to compare the two groups due to highly skewed dependent variable.

[‡]The increase in number of suspensions was statistically significant for the comparison group and was determined using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test (Z=2.98, p<.003).

Dosage Effects

Evidence of ASLSNPP dosage effects for SAT-9 Reading and Math scores was found for the LAUSD agencies serving middle school students. The percent of students who improved in SAT-9 Reading scores and the number who improved in SAT-9 Math scores increased with the number of days attended. Those students who attended at

least 60 days had a higher percentage of improved scores than those who either attended less than 60 days or were in the comparison group. A dosage effect was also found in the number of students who scored above the 25th percentile in 2000-2001 as compared to 1999-2000. Students' movement out of the lowest quartile was directly related to length of participation in the program.

Student Attitudes

The LAUSD students participating in the ASLSNPP programs had very positive attitudes about the programs and the contributions they had made to their learning, achievement, sense of safety, relationships with adults, and development of new interests and skills. Within the group of elementary grade children in the programs, 81.5% indicated that the after school homework assistance helped them. Similarly, 87.5% indicated that their schoolwork had improved as a result of the program. 80.8% said that they felt safe when they participated in the program, 74.1% said they developed new interests or skills in the program, and more than 75% said that after school program staff were easy to talk to and understood them.

More than 76% of middle school participants indicated that after school homework assistance helped them, almost 80% said they learned a lot in the after school program, and nearly 70% said their school work improved as a result of the program. Within the group of middle grade participants, 77.5% indicated that they developed new interests or skills in the program, 84.1% said that after school program staff were easy to talk to, and 82.7% said these staff understood them. More than 81% said they felt safe when they participated in the program and 77.5% said the program is a place they want to be after school.¹⁵

Summary

The results of this LAUSD matched pair comparison group evaluation yielded evidence that the ASLSNPP programs were effective in improving student outcomes, with differential outcomes among various subgroups of participating students. This is despite the fact that this was an initial year of implementation for all of the agencies and length of program participation was limited. A matched comparison group evaluation of impacts during 2000-2001 is under way.

Los Angeles Unified School District: Matched Pair Comparison Group Evaluation of Woodcraft Rangers Program Serving Elementary and Middle School Students

Woodcraft Rangers operates elementary and middle school ASLSNPP programs in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Like the agencies described above, it is a community organization with which LAUSD's *Beyond the Bell* contracts. A matched pair comparison group evaluation was undertaken for its programs,¹⁶ with comparison

¹⁵ Because the survey questions pertained to the ASLSNPP participants' experience in the after school program, non-participants were not surveyed.

¹⁶ Kaiser, M. and Lyons, M. (2001). *Woodcraft Rangers: State of California After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Annual Evaluation Report, 1999-2000*. Los Angeles, CA: Lodestar Management/Research, Inc.

students chosen based on baseline SAT-9 Reading scores, ethnicity, gender, and grade level. The study included 1,650 students in primary analyses, 825 of whom were program participants and 825 of whom were matched comparison students. The six school sites in the program (three elementary and three middle) served large percentages of English Language Learners, ranging from an average of 42% at the middle schools to 80% at the elementary schools. The number of students on the federal free or reduced cost meals program ranged from 79% at one middle school to more than 97% at each of the elementary schools.

Average SAT-9 scores (NCEs) improved in Reading, Language, and Math for all students at the schools, including ASLSNPP participants. There were no statistically significant differences favoring the ASLSNPP participants overall. However, students who participated in the ASLSNPP the longest (5 to 6 months) demonstrated the most positive changes among participants on SAT-9 scores. There was a relationship between the number of months in the program (dosage) and end-of-program grade point averages (GPAs) and improvement in GPAs for middle school students. The relationship between dosage and end-of-year GPAs was of moderate statistical significance. Comparisons between program participants and the matched comparison group students showed overall trends favoring ASLSNPP students in end-of-year GPAs and gains in GPAs from baseline to follow-up, although the differences did not attain statistical significance.

Statistically significant positive patterns were found in the area of improved school attendance. At the elementary grades, program participants had significantly lower absences during the year of program participation than the matched comparison group. There was, in addition, a statistically significant association between the number of months students participated in the program—dosage—and decreases in the number of days absent. Eighty percent of the program participants indicated that the program helped them “a lot” in attending school more regularly.

Student and staff surveys and administrator and parent interviews demonstrated positive changes in behaviors and attitudes, with differences in the types of changes at the elementary and middle school levels.¹⁷ At the elementary program sites, changes were particularly notable in children’s sense of safety and in relationships with peers. At the middle school level, changes were especially notable in assignments completed, attitudes toward school, self-control, and anger management. Administrators, particularly at middle schools, noted that the students looked forward to participating in the program and, as a result, began to perceive the school as a more positive place to be. They reported that without the ASLSNPP program, most of the students would have no other supervision after school. Parents in focus groups indicated that a particularly important aspect of the program is that it provides their children with a safe place to be after school.

¹⁷ The surveys related to students’ experiences in the ASLSNPP, and were administered to program participants but not to comparison group students.

Longitudinal Evaluation of LA's BEST

An important way of understanding the impacts of after school learning programs is to conduct longitudinal evaluations of their effects on participating children. These studies indicate the extent to which effects of the programs are sustained over time and are influenced by continued participation. A decade-long evaluation has been conducted of the *LA's BEST* program. It provides important insights regarding the long-term effects associated with participation in *LA's BEST*, a program on which the ASLSNPP was in part based.

Longitudinal Evaluation of LA's BEST Program

LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) began more than 13 years ago as a community-based initiative closely tied to the Mayor's Office in Los Angeles and strongly supported by the Superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District. A *Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*¹⁸ was released in June 2000. It reports on the effectiveness of the program, which now serves approximately 13,500 students in more than 78 elementary schools. The June 2000 report summarizes the findings of five evaluations of *LA's BEST* completed by UCLA's Center for the Study of Evaluation between March 1990 and Spring 1995. The study is uniquely important because it identified students who were in the program during the 1993-1994 school year and followed them for five years, through 1997-1998, comparing them to students at their schools who were not in the after school program. The evaluation included 19,322 students, 4,312 of whom participated in *LA's BEST* and 15,010 of whom did not. Eighty percent of the children in the program were on the federal free or reduced cost meals program, close to 60% were Limited-English Proficient, 73.7% were Hispanic, and 19.9% were African-American.

The findings of the study are of such significance that they are summarized directly from the report below.¹⁹

Finding #1: Following up students with long-term involvement in the *LA's BEST* program (at least 4 years), higher participation was found to be significantly related to positive achievement on standardized tests of Math, Reading, and Language Arts.

Finding #2: Following up students from grades 2, 3, 4 and 5, higher program participation was found to be related to better subsequent school attendance.

¹⁸ Huang, D., Gribbons, B., Kim, K.S., Lee, C. & Baker, E. (2000). *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance: June 2000*. Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Evaluation, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁹ Details for the findings below (magnitude of change, sample sizes, length of participation, etc.) are contained in Brooks, P.E., and Mojica, C.M. (1995). *Final Evaluation Report: Longitudinal Study of LA'S BEST After-School Education and Enrichment Program*. Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Evaluation, University of California, Los Angeles and Brooks, P., Mojica, C. & Land, R. (1995). *Final Evaluation Report: Longitudinal Study of LA's BEST After-School Education and Enrichment Program, 1992-1994*. Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Evaluation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Finding #3: Using path analysis, it was found that improved school attendance, associated with higher program participation, contributed to improved achievement on standardized tests of Math, Reading, and Language Arts.

Finding #4: Language re-designation rates, reflecting students' transitioning from Limited-English Proficient to Fluent English Proficient status, favored *LA's BEST* students when compared with non-participants. Significant differences were found in re-designation rates in Grades 6 and 8 (although not in grades 5 and 7).²⁰

Finding #5: Follow-up data on absences showed that students who participated in *LA's BEST* had significantly fewer absences in grades 6 and 7 (differences were not found in grades 8 and 9).²¹

Finding #6: In the initial year, *LA's BEST* students began with Math achievement scores that were significantly lower than those of non-participants, but in 1997-98 these differences no longer existed. The finding suggests that the program had "closed the gap" between *LA's BEST* students and other students at their schools.

The summary of five evaluations of *LA's BEST* included additional important findings related to how the program influenced the experiences of children. These findings were as follow:

- Children and parents reported that the safety of the after school program was far superior to the safety in the neighborhood, with differences highly significant. Children's reasons generally related to the violence and harassment they felt existed outside the school gates and their homes.
- Children in the program like school more and were more engaged in school. Approximately 80% of children who participated in the program reported an increased liking of regular school, and half said they liked school "a lot more."
- The program resulted in positive relationships between adults and children—the type of relationships that often make a significant difference in a child's life. 87% of children thought that the grown-ups in the program cared about them "a little" (13%) or "a lot" (74%) and 89% felt that these adults had high hopes for them "a little" (13%) or "a lot" (76%).
- Children in the program reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college. 82% thought they would complete high school and/or attend higher education, with 76% thinking that they would complete four years of college or more.

²⁰ These findings are based on analyses of the fourth grade cohort, 1994-1995. The evaluators expect that similar findings would obtain with other cohorts.

²¹ These findings are based on analyses of the fifth grade cohort, 1994-1995. The evaluators again expect that similar findings would obtain with more extensive analyses including other cohorts.

The independent evaluators' summary from the earlier longitudinal study (Brooks et al, 1995²²) contains the conclusion that:

"Such effects can result in significant later dividends. The positive student attitudes associated with the program and program students' greater trust of adults in their school environment, for example, may well help create students who later in their adolescence find it easier to apply themselves academically, finish high school and pursue higher education." (Huang et al, 2000, p. 15).

²² Brooks, P., Mojica, C., & Land, R. (1995). *Final Evaluation Report: Longitudinal Study of UCLA's BEST After School Education and Enrichment Program, 1992-1994*. Los Angeles California: Center for the Study of Evaluation, University of California, Los Angeles.

FINDINGS FROM LOCAL EVALUATION REPORTS

All ASLSNPP grantees are required to submit evaluation reports annually. Twenty-four local evaluation reports for 2000-2001 were chosen at random for detailed examination and are summarized below. Local evaluation reports were also examined for 1999-2000 and were summarized in *Evaluation of California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2000*.²³ A summary of the 1999-2000 local evaluations is included in the appendices to this report (Appendix A).

Twelve of the local evaluations for 2000-2001 are summarized below. The twelve were selected for inclusion based on the following criteria:

- They included comprehensive information on outcomes and on program operations.
- Most had primarily ASLSNPP funding during the period 1999-2001 such that findings relate directly to this program (and not to the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center program).
- Together, they would provide an overview of findings from the range of agencies operating after school programs across the State under the ASLSNPP.

Alameda Unified School District operated programs at one elementary and one middle school during 2000-2001. Achievement data showed statistically significant increases on the California Content Standards tests in English/Language Arts and in Math. Mixed results were found on SAT-9 tests, with no overall clear pattern. Students in the program had a small decrease in the number of days absent and a statistically significant decrease in the number of suspensions. Statistically significant increases were found on three of four student survey questions the California Department of Education asks all ASLSNPPs to administer. These increases were found on questions related to how often participants wanted to go to school, how often they studied hard for a test, and how often a parent talked with them about school or homework.

The **Bellevue and Wright School Districts**, along with many partners in Sonoma County, operate an after school program at four schools. The students in the program showed marked changes in SAT-9 Reading and Math scores. While many of the students were declining in performance before participating in the program, after participating in it 90% were either improving in Reading or had reached grade level. Teachers reported that 90% of participants had improved in Reading, 87% in Math, 81% in writing, 83% in homework, and 83% in self-confidence.

The **Downey Unified School District and City of Downey** initiated an ASLSNPP program at two elementary schools and two middle schools in January 2001. The improvements students demonstrated during the six months of the program were notable and appeared in part to be attributable to the close coordination with each

²³ Bissell, J. and Malloy, J. (2001). *Evaluation of California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2000*. University of California at Irvine Department of Education in cooperation with Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office, California Department of Education, pp.3-5.

school Principal. SAT-9 Reading scores increased more for ASLSNPP students than for non-participants at their sites. SAT-9 Math scores increased for ASLSNPP participants but decreased for non-participants at the schools. Twice as many program participants moved out of the bottom quartile on SAT-9 performance as did non-participants. The majority of students had improvements in their grade point averages, with the percents ranging from 49% to 84% at individual schools, surpassing the performance of non-participants. Attendance among students in the program increased significantly and the improvements exceeded those of non-participants. Suspensions among program participants decreased significantly.

Glendale Unified School District operates the ASLSNPP at four elementary schools and one middle school. Its evaluation demonstrated significant increases in performance on SAT-9 Reading, Language, and Math scores. Significant increases also occurred in the California Content Standards test in English/Language Arts and Math. On the three SAT-9 tests, the largest increases in scores were among English Language Learners. These students' scores increased significantly and primarily accounted for the marked changes that occurred. Teachers reported that more than half of the program participants improved in each of the following areas: Reading, Writing, English Language Learning, and Math. Student absences decreased at three of the elementary schools. Principals felt that the safety provided by the after school program was especially important and, consistent with this perception, 90% of parents said their children felt safer in school since coming to the after school program.

Greenfield Union School District operates after school programs at six elementary and three middle schools that are funded by both the ASLSNPP and the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. During 2000-2001, 55% of the after school program participants improved their SAT-9 Reading scores, and 53% increased their scores in Math. Of those participants whose pre-test scores were in the bottom quartile, 73% made gains in Reading and 76% made gains in Math. The number of students scoring at or above grade level (50th percentile or above) increased by 2.2% in Reading and 5% in Math. Greenfield's increases in after school program participants scoring at or above grade level were 1.6 times greater than those found countywide in Kern County in Reading and 2.4 times greater in Math. All participating schools showed improvements on the four survey questions asked by the state: wanting to go to school, studying hard for a test, feeling safe at school, and having a parent talk with them about school or homework.

Greenfield's 1999-2000 evaluation demonstrated substantial reductions in crime rates that program staff and law enforcement officials attributed in large part to the after school programs. Petty theft and vandalism—crimes often committed by youth—declined by 10.4% and 11%, respectively. Crimes against children, including willful cruelty and endangerment, and lewd acts against children decreased by 48% and 46%, respectively. In 2000-2001, Greenfield reported an additional decline of 22% in grand theft, a decrease of 13% in petty theft, and a decline of 80% in vandalism under \$1000, again attributing the reduction of crime primarily to the after school programs.

The **Lawndale Unified School District** operates the ASLSNPP at three elementary schools and one middle school. With the exception of Reading at one site, SAT-9 Reading and Math scores increased at all sites. At three of the four sites, improvements were statistically significant on SAT-9 Reading scores and on the California Content Standards tests in Language Arts and Math. English Language Learners in the program showed improvements that were highly significant. Close collaboration exists between the regular day teachers and the after school program, and teachers recommend students to the program who are at risk of grade retention. The after school program has implemented an effective behavior management system that has enabled children to accomplish goals successfully. Teachers have reported that the students' behavior has improved markedly during the regular day, and they have observed the after school programs to see how the system is implemented.

The **Lindsay Unified School District** operates three ASLSNPP elementary school sites in collaboration with multiple partners in Tulare County. Participants in the program registered slight gains on SAT-9 Reading and Math scores, with the exception of one school that had declines in Math scores. In most instances, somewhat larger gains were experienced among higher dosage students who participated in the ASLSNPP program for 120 days or more. Gang violence is a problem in Lindsay, and the program has significant value in providing a safe place for children. *When the ASLSNP program stopped operating during the summer, gang violence escalated and resulted in two drive-by shootings.*

Monrovia Unified School District conducted evaluations of its ASLSNPP sites in both 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 using a school site comparison group approach. The program was operated at four elementary and two middle school sites. Performance of students in the after school program was compared with a randomly selected group of non-participants from the same grade levels at each school site. In both years, program participants demonstrated large gains in academic achievement on SAT-9 Reading and Math scores. At five of the six schools, participants scored below the school-wide comparison groups on both SAT-9 measures in 1999-2000 and above these same groups in 2000-2001. School-wide data indicated that students in the after school program averaged 2% higher in regular day attendance than the comparison group. School administrators, teachers, and parents consider the program to be successful in achieving its objectives. Teachers are highly supportive of the program, coordinate their activities with it, and share resources to help students with homework (e.g., handouts, supplies, textbooks, and other materials). Parents indicate that the program has exceeded their expectations in encouraging academic growth and achievement, providing homework support, fostering positive attitudes toward school, and providing a safe environment.

At **William Morena Jr. High School in Calexico** students in the ASLSNPP demonstrated gains in both SAT-9 Reading and Math scores in 2000-2001. Those students in the program for *two years* showed significant increases in SAT-9 Math scores, which were attributed to the after school program spending significant time working with an Accelerated Math program. Low-performing students at the school typically begin the year with fairly good grades, and as the work gets harder, many

students' grades go down. The after school program students maintained their grade point averages, considered to be a sign that the program has been successful with these students. Among after school program participants, there were increases in wanting to go to school and in studying hard for a test. In addition, there was a slight decrease in absences among after school program participants.

The **City of Pico Rivera and the El Rancho Unified School District** operate ASLSNPPs at 12 elementary schools and one middle school. SAT-9 Reading and Math data at the end of the 2001 school year showed children in the program scoring at virtually the same level as other children at the same grade levels in the participating schools. This was considered an indication that the program is accelerating learning and moving the participants toward state and national standards. The evaluation notes that "Teachers and school site principals lament that the program is at capacity, as they desire the opportunity to refer additional students to the program who are demonstrating inadequate academic progress." The state survey showed large increases among students in the program in wanting to go to school, studying hard for a test, feeling safe at school, and talking with parents about school or homework.

The **San Leandro Unified School District** operates an ASLSNPP program at two middle school sites. Both schools showed increases in SAT-9 Math scores, and one also showed increases on SAT-9 Reading scores. ASLSNPP students reported that they talked more with their parents about school or homework. All students who had participated in the ASLSNPP for six weeks or longer at both schools were promoted. Staff reported that the program was only serving a fraction of the eligible students and could expand to include more participants.

Santa Rosa City Schools has four elementary schools within its ASLSNPP. SAT-9 scores did not indicate improvements, but the California Content Standards tests showed gains, particularly among the students who had participated for two years. Participants increased in regular school attendance, including marked gains among children who were in the program for more than 90 days. Students expressed the belief that the program had been very helpful in assisting them with the completion of their homework, and teachers, administrators and parents indicated that it had played a significant role in keeping children safe after school.

The **City of Stockton and Stockton Unified School District** operate the ASLSNPP at three elementary schools. Analyses of SAT-9 scores showed sizable increases in Reading during 2000-2001 but no notable changes in Math. A second well-regarded test used nationally, the Wide Range Achievement Test, was also administered to the participants in the after school program. It demonstrated large gains in both English/Language Arts and Math. Reductions were not found in days absent but small decreases occurred in disciplinary referrals and suspensions. Slight increases occurred in participating children's feelings of safety at school. All of the parents interviewed stated that they were very pleased with the program and that they had seen improvements in their children, including improved grades, homework, attitudes, and behavior.

A summary of evaluations of **Sacramento START** is included because it is one of the programs on which the ASLSNPP was based and many other programs have adopted its successful approaches. Sacramento *START* (Students Today Achieving Results for Tomorrow) was established in 1995 by the City of Sacramento and has become a regional after school program operated in collaboration with the County of Sacramento and six area school districts. In 2000-2001, the program involved 32 elementary schools and served 3,820 students in grades 1-6. An early evaluation, *Sacramento START: An Evaluation Report, September 1996-May 1997*,²⁴ demonstrated findings that have been replicated in subsequent studies. It found that students in *START* improved in standardized tests, with the greatest impact on students who began the program with Reading scores in the lowest quartile. Compared to students with similar performance, the *START* students showed substantially larger improvements in achievement. Students who participated for a semester or more benefited most from the program, and those who participated a full year improved markedly.

*Achieving Results*²⁵ and *Supporting Student Achievement*²⁶ are evaluation reports for the program during 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, respectively. Statistically significant growth in SAT-9 Math scores was found for *START* participants in both the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 evaluations (increases were not found in SAT-9 Reading scores). There was an increase in both years in the number of students above the bottom quartile on the SAT-9 tests, with particularly notable improvements occurring in Math. 10% of students moved out of the bottom quartile in Math in 1999-2000 and 7% moved out of the bottom quartile in Math in 2000-2001. English Language Learners made the greatest achievement test gains in Math in both years.

Attendance improved significantly from 1999 to 2000, with a decrease in days absent from 8 to 5 days. In 2000-2001, school attendance remained essentially constant. A group of 227 returning *START* participants showed steady improvements in SAT-9 Math test performance, gaining in performance slightly more than the overall group. These students' improvement in attendance in 1999-2000 (a drop from 7.3 days absent to 5 days absent) was sustained at the same level in 2000-2001.

What ASLSNPP Evaluations Say About Partnerships and Contributed Resources

Local evaluations provide evidence of matching funds and in-kind resources that equal or exceed the 50% match required in the ASLSNPP legislation. The large amount of contributed resources received by programs is one of the striking findings across the evaluations. Programs documented resources from cities that included support from park and recreation departments and police departments, direct funding from city budgets, and community development block grants. County support included funding through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Family (TANF) program and provision of health and social services and pregnancy prevention and smoking prevention programs.

²⁴ Lamar, J. (1998). *Sacramento START: An Evaluation Report, September 1996-May 1997*. Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, Neighborhood Planning and Development Services Department.

²⁵ Minicucci, C. (2001). *Achieving Results: Evaluation Report for START 1999/2000*. Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, Department of Parks and Recreation.

²⁶ Minicucci, C. (2001). *Supporting Student Achievement: Evaluation Report for START 2000/2001*. Sacramento, CA: City of Sacramento, Department of Parks and Recreation.

Partners that contributed resources, staff and services included Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, youth development programs such as Beacons Centers, community-based organizations, libraries, museums, arts centers, community volunteers, businesses, foundations, and other donors. Virtually all programs obtained funds for snacks from U.S. Department of Agriculture food and nutrition programs. The majority of programs involved volunteers from community colleges, California State University, University of California, or independent colleges. College student volunteers helped as tutors, in homework assistance, in leading enrichment activities, and in working with children and youth in a range of other activities. High school students often served as volunteers, working side-by-side with college students. *More than one-third of programs reviewed leveraged sizable resources by obtaining AmeriCorps workers as tutors.*

The evaluations demonstrated broadly-based partnerships that brought to ASLSNPPs the capabilities of multiple sectors of government, higher education, and communities. They allowed programs to operate with child-adult ratios that were frequently lower than 20 to 1, and made the ASLSNPP one of California's most efficiently operated education programs.

San Diego's *Critical Hours* and "6 to 6" programs are examples of significant levels of city, county, and community involvement and support from multiple public and private sources. In the case of *Critical Hours*, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors provides significant funding for the program and it is considered a major asset in fostering safety and preventing crime in the County. In the case of the San Diego "6-to-6" program, the Mayor's Office provides substantial support for the program. It is considered a uniquely important asset in the community that provides before-and-after school programs during the hours when most parents work. Similar patterns of significant support from local government are seen in the Sacramento *START* and LA's *BEST* which, along with the San Diego *Critical Hours* program, were the model for the ASLSNPP. All have influenced programs statewide in their emphasis on collaborations that result in a broad base of support and contributions to the programs, reducing State funding required for high quality, effective after school activities.

STUDY EXAMINING GRADE RETENTION AND COST SAVINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

In order to assess cost savings associated with the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program, a study was undertaken examining grade retention among participants and similar students at their schools. Data were collected on retention for participants in the ASLSNPP program who were in the bottom quartile on the SAT-9 Reading test and for comparable students at the same school who were not in the program.

Background: Grade Promotion and Retention Policies in California

Chapter 742, Statutes of 1996 (Assembly Bill 1626, Wayne), California's Pupil Promotion and Retention legislation, went into effect on January 1, 1999. The statute "requires the governing board of each school district to approve a policy regarding the promotion and retention of pupils." The school district policy must establish criteria for students eligible to be promoted from grade 2 to 3, 3 to 4, and 4 to 5, from elementary to intermediate school, and from intermediate to high school. Most districts have established policies for promotion and retention that cover at least grades 2 through 9 and many include each grade from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Criteria for retention must be based on either (a) test scores on State tests or (b) the students' grades and other indicators of academic achievement designated by the district. If using the second set of criteria, identification in grades 2, 3 and 4 is to be based primarily on Reading and in higher grades on Reading, English Language Arts, and Math. While districts vary considerably in their grade retention criteria, students performing below the 25th percentile on the SAT-9 Reading test are almost uniformly identified as being at risk of being retained.

Study of Grade Retention and Promotion and the ASLSNPP

The purpose of the study was to determine the number of ASLSNPP participants initially below the 25th percentile on SAT-9 Reading scores who were retained at the end of the school year and the number of non-participating students at the same school site initially below the 25th percentile who were grade retained. Earlier interviews with principals and teachers had suggested that the program was enabling many high-risk students to improve to such a degree that they no longer were at risk of grade retention. The study was aimed at confirming or disconfirming this reported pattern and looking at the lowest performing participants to determine whether the ASLSNPP was assisting them to be promoted. It was also designed to determine the cost savings associated with reductions in grade retention if they occurred as a result of the ASLSNPP.

Study Methodology

Data were collected from 20 ASLSNPP grantees²⁷ that represented the statewide geographic distribution of the ASLSNPP and the ethnic and language diversity characteristic of the statewide program. There was a substantial limitation in the sample in that it did not include the largest districts in the State. Grantees needed to obtain the data from school sites, and these districts felt they could not undertake such a process for all sites or for a large enough sample of schools to be representative of those participating. A second phase of the study is now being conducted to collect data from the State's largest districts.

Data were collected for 9,408 students in grades 2 through 8. Of this number, 1,195 were in the ASLSNPP and scored below the 25th percentile on the SAT-9 Reading test in Spring 2000. The remaining 8,213 students represented all other students at the same schools and grade levels who scored below the 25th percentile but were not in the program.

The central study questions were:

- What percent of participants in the ASLSNPP during 2000-2001 who scored below the 25th percentile in Spring 2000 were grade retained at the end of 2001?
- What percent of non-participants at the same sites who scored below the 25th percentile in Spring 2000 were grade retained at the end of 2001?
- What differences were found in grade retention between students below the 25th percentile in Spring 2000 who participated in the ASLSNPP in 2000-2001 and those who did not?

Study Findings

The study findings are presented by grade level in Table 13. As can be seen in the table, at every grade level, a smaller percentage of students were grade retained if they participated in the ASLSNPP than if they did not. The largest differences were found in the primary grades. In grade 2, grade retentions were 7.09% for non-participants and 4.4% for program participants initially below the 25th percentile. In grade 3, retentions were 7.6% for non-participants and 2.4% for participants initially in the bottom percentile. This represents a reduction of 53.4% in students retained in the primary grades.

²⁷ Three districts were included in a pilot study and 17 in the subsequent grade retention study reported here.

Table 13. Comparison of ASLSNPP Participants and Total School Population Students Below the 25th Percentile in SAT-9 Reading and Not Promoted to the Next Grade Grades 2 through 8							
Grade	# of ASLSNPP Students Below 25th %ile	# of ASLSNPP Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	% of ASLSNPP Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	# of Students Below 25th %ile	# of Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	% of Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	Difference in Percentage Not Promoted (Retentions)
2	135	6	4.4%	541	38	7.0%	2.6%
3	255	6	2.4%	993	75	7.6%	5.2%
4	276	3	1.1%	1154	26	2.3%	1.2%
5	214	2	0.9%	1174	17	1.4%	0.5%
6	173	5	2.9%	1768	53	3.0%	0.1%
7	80	0	0.0%	1391	32	2.3%	2.3%
8	62	0	0.0%	1192	8	0.7%	0.7%

The study findings are aggregated by grade span in Table 14. At the elementary grades (2 through 5), the difference in the percentage of students grade retained is 2.1%, with 1.9% of participants in the ASLSNPP grade retained and 4.0% of students not in the program grade retained. At the middle school level, the difference is .6%, with 1.6% of students in the ASLSNPP grade retained and 2.1% of students not in the program grade retained.²⁸

Table 14. Comparison of ASLSNPP Participants and Total School Population Students Below 25%tile in SAT 9 Reading and Not Promoted to The Next Grade Elementary and Middle Grades							
Grade	# of ASLSNPP Students Below 25th %ile	# of ASLSNPP Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	% of ASLSNPP Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	# of Students Below 25th %ile	# of Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	% of Students Below 25th %ile and Not Promoted	Difference in Percentage Not Promoted (Retentions)
Elementary 2-5	880	17	1.9%	3862	156	4.0%	2.1%
Middle 6-8	315	5	1.6%	4351	93	2.1%	0.6%

Educational Implications

The implications of these findings are substantial. They derive in part from the adverse effects often associated with grade retention in the primary grades and the potential of the ASLSNPP to offset these effects. While it is sometimes assumed that retention helps students develop the necessary skills for success in school, research studies (the

²⁸ The patterns are similar to those found in the pilot study undertaken during 1999-2000. The overall figures also conform generally with national data indicating that, historically, approximately 20% of students have been retained at least once in their educational careers (15% of these students have been retained twice), with disproportionately large numbers of grade retentions in the primary grades.

preponderance of which relate to the elementary grades) show that for most children an additional year at the same grade level does not produce long-term gains in achievement.²⁹ Studies also document that students who have been retained tend to have low self-esteem, dislike school, have a greater likelihood of dropping out, and get into trouble more frequently than students who have been allowed to continue to the next grade.³⁰ The costs of retention in terms of self-esteem and emotional problems have been repeatedly documented, with academic gains being questionable.³¹ *The fact that the ASLSNPP appears to be a strategy for avoiding grade retention is of major significance.*

Cost Savings and Fiscal Implications

California's Proposition 98 per pupil spending for K-12 education is proposed at \$7,058 in the Governor's Budget for 2002-2003. This level of pupil funding is re-incurred every time a student repeats a grade. Table 15 illustrates the estimated savings to the State associated with reduced grade repetition for ASLSNPP students in 2002-2003. The estimated cost savings to the State are \$20,150,104. However, improvements in academic performance—which are directly associated with reduced grade repetition—increase with longer periods of ASLSNPP program participation.³² Actual cost savings are likely to exceed \$21 million, reflecting the effects of longer periods of participation in the program in 2002-2003. Cost savings in 2001-2002, when approximately 97,000 students are being served, are projected at \$11,112,174.³³

Table 15. Estimated Cost Savings Attributable to Reduced Grade Retention for ASLSNPP Students*				
Grade Level	Estimated Number of ASLSNPP Students 2002-2003	Estimated % of Students Retention Prevented	Estimated # of Students Retention Prevented	Estimated Savings (# of Retentions Prevented x \$7,058)
Grades 2-5	120,000	2.1%	2,520	\$17,778,616
Grades 6-9 [†]	56,000	.6%	336	\$ 2,371,488
Grades 2-9	176,000	Total Estimated Savings		\$20,150,104

* Figures are based on funding contained in the 2002-2003 Budget Act.

[†] The grade retention figures found in the study for grades 6-8 are used in the analysis for grade 9. Limited numbers of 9th graders have participated in the program.

²⁹ Balow, H. (1990). *Retention in Grade: A Failed Procedure*. Riverside, CA: University of California, California Educational Research Cooperative.

³⁰ Shepard, L. and Smith, M. (Eds.) (1989). *Flunking Grades: Research and Policies on Retention*. New York: Palmer Press.

³¹ Karweit, N. (1999). *Grade Retention: Prevalence, Timing, and Effects*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

³² Evaluation results from the period 1999-2001 suggest dosage effects and cumulative effects of sustained participation. The consistency of the patterns indicates that they need to be considered in reliably projecting cost savings associated with reduced grade retention.

³³ The cost savings figure is based on 97,000 students (approximately 67,000 elementary and 30,000 middle school) and Proposition 98 per pupil annual spending of \$7,002.

The annual State costs of the program for students participating more than 120 days and more than 150 days—the periods of participation frequently associated with the largest gains—are \$600 and \$750 respectively. Adding the required 50% local match, total expenditures associated with student participation in the ASLSNPP for 120 and 150 days are \$900 and \$1,125 respectively. Total per pupil expenditures in California, including all funding sources—the total costs incurred when a student repeats a grade—are projected to be \$9,236 in 2002-2003. These figures provide another way of understanding the relative cost savings associated with the ASLSNPP and its impacts on reducing grade repetition.

It is important to underscore that the estimates presented above may not reflect fully future reductions in grade retention and savings in grade repetition costs associated with the ASLSNPP. Evaluations of the program often show that the longer a child participates, the greater the academic benefits. It is thus likely that the percentage of students in the program who are promoted will be greater as the duration of local programs increases.

It is also important to recognize other cost savings associated with the program. A significant area of savings is reduction in the need for and costs of interventions for Limited-English Proficient students. The UCLA evaluation of *LA's BEST* demonstrated increased rates of re-designation to fluent English proficiency for these students.³⁴ Another saving likely to be realized is, therefore, in the cost of special services for English Language Learners, whose academic performance has been shown in numerous ASLSNPP evaluations to improve, particularly with high dosage program participation.

Savings associated with reductions in juvenile crime, gangs, violence, vandalism, teenage sex, drug use, and delinquency have also been reported in studies of after school programs across the nation.^{35,36} Potential savings associated with low-income families' increased work productivity and their transitioning from welfare to work as a result of reliable after school environments for their children are also suggested in national studies.^{37,38}

³⁴ Huang, D., Gribbons, B., Kim, K.S., Lee, C. & Baker, E. (2000). *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance: June, 2000*. Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Evaluation, University of California, Los Angeles.

³⁵ U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice (2000). *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart After-School Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Authors.

³⁶ Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California. (2001). *California's After-School Choice: Juvenile Crime or Safe Learning Time*. Oakland, CA: Author.

³⁷ The After-School Corporation (1999). *After-School Programs: An Analysis of Need, Current Research, and Public Opinion*. New York, NY: Author.

³⁸ Fletcher, A. (2001). *Balanced and Diversified Funding: A formula for Long-Term Sustainability for After School Programs*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education/Foundation Consortium Partnership.

Table 15a. Estimated Cost Savings Attributable to Reduced Grade Retention for ASLSNPP Students*				
Grade Level	Estimated Number of ASLSNPP Students 2001-2002	Estimated % of Students Retention Prevented	Estimated # of Students Retention Prevented	Estimated Savings (# of Retentions Prevented x \$7,002)
Grades 2-5	67,000	2.1%	1407	\$ 9,851,814
Grades 6-9 [†]	30,000	.6%	180	\$ 1,260,360
Grades 2-9	97,000	Total Estimated Savings		\$11,112,174

* Figures are based on Proposition 98 per pupil expenditures of \$7,002 in 2001-2002.

[†] The grade retention figures for grades 6-8 are used in the analysis for grade 9. Limited numbers of 9th graders have participated in the program.

THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Costs of the ASLSNPP

One of the most striking findings regarding the ASLSNPP is its cost-effectiveness as an educational intervention. It costs the State \$5.00 per child per day for local ASLSNPP programs that operate for 3 hours, typically from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. The cost per student hour in State funds is \$1.67. Additional matching resources are required locally, with each \$2 in State funding having to be matched by \$1 in other funding or in-kind contributed resources. The cost for intervention programs for students in grades 2-6 under (a) the Pupil Promotion and Retention program, (b) the Elementary School Intensive Reading Program, (c) the Core Supplemental Instructional Program, and (d) the Remedial Supplemental Instructional Program are each \$3.25 per hour. Studies of the ASLSNPP have repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness despite relatively low costs to the State. Evaluations show that the ASLSNPP has significant effects on student achievement, promotes self-confidence and positive attitudes, and provides a safe environment for children and youth while costing the state only \$1.67 per student per hour.

What factors are associated with the cost-effectiveness of the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program?

Effectiveness: Extending Learning Time

The first part of the answer pertains to the program's effectiveness and to the close relationship between what the ASLSNPP program does and what research indicates makes a significant difference in student achievement: *it extends learning time in academically significant ways.*

Research indicates a clear relationship between achievement gains and the time students spend engaged in learning and in successfully completing instructional activities.³⁹ Additional time allocated to reading is directly associated with improved test scores.⁴⁰ Studies of homework show that low-performing students who routinely do homework improve their grades significantly.⁴¹ Students in other industrialized countries spend substantially more time on homework than U.S. students and in some nations (Japan and Germany), students have tutors who help them in the afternoons, and these are believed to be factors associated with their high levels of achievement.⁴² In essence, the ASLSNPP involves students in education, literacy, and enrichment activities after school, including homework assistance and tutoring, that have been shown to be powerful influences on improved academic performance.

³⁹ Thomas, E. (1984). *Extending the School Year and Day*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management: ERIC Digest, # 7.

⁴⁰ Wahlberg, H. (1988). Synthesis of research on time and learning. *Educational Leadership*, 45(6), 76-85.

⁴¹ Kane, C. (1994). *Prisoners Of Time: Research. What We Know and What We Need to Know*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Cost: Leveraging State Funds to Multiply Resources

The second part of the answer pertains to costs and the *leveraged resources* that are integral to the operation of the program. The ASLSNPP is distinctive among K-12 education programs in California in the large proportion of contributed resources associated with its operation.⁴³ Shared funding is a basic underpinning of the program. The enabling legislation requires that each local program provide matching funds or in-kind resources equivalent to 50% for each dollar of State grant funds. Programs are encouraged to develop community partnerships so that ASLSNPP funds can exceed the required match.⁴⁴ *The important aspect of this is that ASLSNPP programs have, in fact, been highly successful in leveraging State funding by partnering with many other agencies.*⁴⁵ The result is that the State costs of the program are augmented by resources from an array of other funding sources, creating a program that integrates services from a range of agencies and individuals, delivering a variety of educational, enrichment, and social services to children and youth at the school site during the after school hours.

⁴³ This pattern has been characteristic of the program since its inception and was a central attribute of the three programs on which it was based: Sacramento *START*; LA's *BEST*; and San Diego's *Critical Hours*. The leveraging of resources has been a feature of the program as it has been implemented across the State.

⁴⁴ Fletcher, Andria J. (2001). *Balanced and Diversified Funding: A Formula for Long-Term Sustainability for After School Programs*, Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education/Foundation Consortium Partnership.

⁴⁵ This pattern is reflected in local evaluation reports for 2000-2001. It is seen in the funding of the programs on which the ASLSNPP was based, as documented in *Profiles of Successful Financing Strategies. Out-of-School Time Project*. Washington, D.C.: Finance Project (2001).

FINDINGS FROM SURVEYS OF STUDENTS, PARENTS, SCHOOLTEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS

In order to evaluate the ASLSNPP, it is also important to examine findings from surveys of children, parents, schoolteachers, and administrators. The results of surveys conducted during 2000-2001⁴⁶ are presented below and are very similar to those of 1999-2000.⁴⁷ They are highly positive and strikingly consistent across programs. Among all groups, the programs are seen as contributing substantially to children's academic performance, attendance, behavior, happiness, safety, quality of after school time, and the well-being of families and communities.⁴⁸

Student Surveys

Elementary School Students

Being in the after school program helps me get my homework done: A lot—82%

Being in the after school program helps me do a good job with my homework: A lot—82%

Being in the after school program helps me do better at reading and writing: A lot—82%

Being in the after school program helps me do math better: A lot—82%

Being in the after school program helps me feel more confident about learning: A lot—74%

Being in the after school program helps me feel happier with my teacher: A lot—75%

Middle School Students

After school homework assists me: Strongly agree or agree—77%

I learned a lot in the after school program: Strongly agree or agree—78%

I developed new interests or skills in the after school program: Strongly agree or agree—78%

I feel safe when I participate in the program: Strongly agree or agree—82%

The program is a place I want to be after school: Strongly agree or agree—78%

After school program people understand me: Strongly agree or agree—83%

Student Comments

"I wish we had the program all summer."

"I love the program. I don't want it to end."

"I finish my homework and then help others finish too."

⁴⁶ Survey findings for 1999-2000 are contained in Bissell, J. and Malloy, J. (2001). *Evaluation of California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2000*. University of California at Irvine Department of Education in cooperation with Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office, California Department of Education.

⁴⁷ The findings represent the attitudes expressed by survey responders. Response rates were not reported by local agencies.

⁴⁸ Survey questions pertained to participants in the ASLSNPP and their experiences, and comparable data are not available for non-participants.

"I've been coming four days a week since the start of school. If I'm having trouble or I don't understand something, my tutor helps me. It helps me get better grades in school."

"There are more people to help us learn more and do our homework. After that, I like to do art, play basketball, play with the computers, and hang out with my friends."

"It's a good program and helps us a lot. The supervisors care about us and want us to be safe."

"The after school program made my learning better and they help me a lot. I like it because they help you with math, spelling, and they read to you."

"My teacher says that thanks to you I'm doing much better in school. For my opinion I think the program is great!!! I recommend it to all my friends."

Parent Surveys

Elementary Grade Parents

The After School Program helped my child do better in school: A lot —90%

The After School Program helped my child increase frequency of homework completion: A lot —82%

The After School Program helped my child improve reading and writing skills: A lot —73%

The After School Program helped my child improve math skills: A lot —82%

The After School Program helped my child have positive relationships with teachers: A lot —82%

The After School Program helped my child feel more of a sense of belonging at school: A lot —100%

Elementary and Middle Grade Parents

Does the after school program help your child finish homework more often? Yes—93%

Does the after school program help your child do a better job on homework? Yes—90%

Does the after school program help your child read better? Yes—79%

Does the after school program help your child write better? Yes—80%

Does the after school program help your child do better in math? Yes—82%

Since coming to the after school program, does your child get along better with the teacher? Yes—86%

Parent Comments

"The After School Program is the best thing that the school district has provided to many kids including my daughter. I hope this program will continue to operate. I thank all of the people involved in this (teachers, volunteers and all of the staff)." [translated from Spanish]

"My son has been Student of the Month since he joined the After School Program."

"My child likes to read more now."

"The After School Program is a great help to me because it helps my child in things I don't understand."

"Thank you for everything. Thank you for treating my daughters well. I hope with all my heart that you will accept them again into the program next year." [translated from Spanish]

"We are very grateful to have our daughter in such a caring and safe environment."

School Staff Comments: Teachers

"Great job! The program has made a big difference in the academic achievement of the kids involved."

"I like having a good place for some of my needier students to do homework. Tutors were willing to ask me for help and were willing to really work with the students."

"The program really has helped my students. No retention in 4th grade this year!"

"Below grade level students always have completed homework to turn in. For some students, this is the only true help they receive."

"The program has increased our students' English language development levels through songs and meaningful interactions."

"Homework was completed each day—if she didn't go to the after school program, no one at home could help her and she wouldn't get it done."

"A student who was failing managed to graduate by attending writing class."

"There is one student who had a very negative attitude towards others and was in the office on a regular basis. Since the after school program, I've noticed a tremendous improvement in his relationships with others."

"The after-school program has really helped my students reinforce the concepts from our regular program. They have the opportunity to work in groups of 15 instead of 35 and we can really see the results."

"The students in my class look forward to staying after school.... Sometimes the other teacher explains things in a different way that they understand better."

School Staff Comments: Principals

"Our Middle School has been fortunate to be an After School Partnerships Program recipient. Staff, students, parents and community members alike have benefited from

having a high quality academic intervention program on site to address the school needs of our highest risk population.”

“Many of our teachers supervise or teach the after-school program, and as a result, students and teachers are making deeper and more meaningful connections with each other.”

“There was an increase in Framework and recreational reading by the students.... Many children had a SAFE place to be where they could and did learn and grow after school. We are looking forward to next year with the program.”

“We have seen an improvement in school discipline because of the after-school program. I believe this is due to a more positive connection students are making to the school and the fact that students are doing better academically.”

“The program has enriched the community by creating a center where young people can engage in healthy, safe and positive after-school activities where previously very little was available to them.”

SUMMARY

The ASLSNPP has consistently demonstrated positive effects on academic achievement and has been associated with improved student attendance, behavior, attitudes, confidence about learning, and social skills, and decreased disciplinary problems and suspensions. It has shown that additional after school learning time can result in significant improvements in school achievement and can be the key to academic success and enhanced safety among students in low-income communities. The approximately 97,000 children and youth currently served by the ASLSNPP are participating in educational and enrichment experiences that are resulting in substantial gains in Reading and Math, positive relationships with caring adults, and a range of new opportunities in their after school lives.

The largest improvements are among children and youth most at risk of school failure—those having the greatest need for assistance to address academic problems, and frequently are among students who participate in the program for the longest periods. Children repeatedly report learning more in school and feeling safer as a result of the program, and parents, teachers, and principals echo this belief.

Cost savings to the State associated with reductions in grade repetition are projected at more than \$20 million annually—savings of such a magnitude that they offset significantly the costs of program growth. Additional savings are likely in association with decreased juvenile crime. These savings and the relatively low cost of the program, in part attributable to the required local match of \$1 for every \$2 in State funds, make it a cost-effective strategy for addressing the needs of California's students during non-school hours.

Appendices

APPENDIX A.

FINDINGS FROM LOCAL EVALUATION REPORTS, 1999-2000

Local Evaluation Findings: Program Outcomes

The **Anaheim City and Magnolia School Districts** participated in a comprehensive study of their ASLSNPP sites during 1999-2000. The data for sixteen schools demonstrated an increase of 11% in Reading scores on the SAT-9 and an increase of 25% in Math scores on the SAT-9. Statistically significant increases in six schools were reported among participating ASLSNPP students on the Supplemental English/Language Arts tests (mean gains of 8%) and Supplemental Content Standards Math tests (mean gains of 47%). In surveys among teachers, 32% noted improved academic progress in one or more subjects among ASLSNPP participants; 44% indicated an increase in homework completed; and 28% indicated an improvement in work habits. 94% of parents said the program was helping children do a better job in their homework and 88% said the program was helping their children get better grades.

Greenfield Union School District in Bakersfield had seven elementary and two middle schools in the ASLSNPP and in the 21st Century Community Learning Center program during 1999-2000. The district attributed significant increases in scores on the SAT-9 Reading and Math tests and the Supplemental Content Standards tests in English/Language Arts and Math to these programs. Similarly, it attributed to the programs a gain of 1,861 days in attendance, a 10% decrease in the number of suspensions and Alternative Educational Placements, and reductions in crimes perpetrated by youth and crimes against children.

San Francisco Unified School District's Program Evaluation and Research Department undertook an evaluation of the ASLSNPP program in the District during 1999-2000.⁴⁹ Thirteen middle schools, five elementary schools, and two K-8 schools participated in the program. The evaluation showed that students who were in the 1st and 2nd quartiles in baseline SAT-9 Reading or Math scores (based on NCEs) had significant improvements during the year of the program. ASLSNPP students in the bottom quartile at all schools except two made significant improvements in Reading, Math, or both. Not only did low performing students in the ASLSNPP improve, but all students in the program, on average, improved in their SAT-9 Reading and Math scores between the baseline and the end of the year, and the overall gains in both Reading and Math were statistically significant.

For most schools, other students' SAT-9 test scores also improved during 1999-2000. Due to this pattern, it is unclear the extent to which improvements are related to participation in the ASLSNPP.⁵⁰ ASLSNPP students also reported that they received

⁴⁹ Trousdale, D. 2001. *Final Evaluation Report: After School Learning and Safe neighborhoods Partnerships Program*, 1999-2000. San Francisco Unified School District, Program Evaluation and Research Department. San Francisco, CA.

⁵⁰ While there were gains found districtwide on SAT-9 scores, at some ASLSNPP schools, program participants showed significant gains on SAT-9 scores while other students at the school did not.

substantial and high quality instruction from after school tutors. Changes in grade point averages were examined for ASLSNPP participants. For students with a GPA of 2.00 or below at baseline, improvements in GPA were found over the year. Approximately 36% of these students improved by .25 or more points. These findings, like those on the SAT-9 Reading and Math scores, suggest that the ASLSNPP had the most pronounced effects on students who were initially at risk and in need of academic assistance.

Tehama County's After School Consortium's Safety, Education and Recreation for Rural Families (S.E.R.R.F.) served ten schools. Results of the Spring 2000 SAT-9 tests demonstrated statistically significant gains in Reading scores among ASLSNPP participants in grades 2 through 6 and in Math scores in grades 4 and 6. Consistent with these results, teaching staff at participating schools reported improvement in ASLSNPP participating students' academic skills and abilities. Subgroup analyses showed statistically significant improvements in SAT-9 Reading and Math scores among English Language Learners.

The **Vacaville Unified School District** reported an increase of 21.66% in SAT-9 Reading scores and 19.05% in SAT-9 Math scores. At the end of the year, higher dosage program participants outscored the rest of the school in Reading and Math in all but one grade level. ASLSNPP participants also demonstrated improved grades, attributed by the District to access to homework and literacy assistance. These findings are particularly noteworthy because many participants were recommended to the program due to academic and/or behavior problems.

In the **Bakersfield City School District**, ASLSNPP program students showed marked increases in SAT 9 scores—gains that were significantly larger than district average gains—and the District considered the after school program to have been responsible for these gains. At **Burbank Unified School District's Luther Burbank Middle** school, SAT-9 scores among ASLSNPP participants showed improvements of 38% in Reading and 26% in Math scores, substantially larger than District improvement trends. At **Long Beach Unified School District's** Will Rogers Middle School, findings indicated a "very successful" program based on academic performance and on satisfaction with the program among staff, parents, and students. **Pasadena Unified School District's LEARNs** program reported improved homework completion and improved behavior for students participating in the ASLSNPP. The **Pajaro Valley Unified School District** reported improved attendance and improved SAT-9 Reading and Math scores among students in its ASLSNPP program.

APPENDIX B.

LIST OF GRANTEES INCLUDED IN EVALUATION REPORT

Matched-Pair Comparison Group Studies

- Santa Ana Unified School District (Orange County)
- Los Angeles Unified School District, *Beyond the Bell: A World Fit for Kids, Building Up L.A., City of San Fernando, KYDS–Keep Youth Doing Something* (Los Angeles County)
- Los Angeles Unified School District, *Beyond the Bell: Woodcraft Rangers* (Los Angeles County)

Longitudinal Evaluation Study

- LA's *BEST* (Los Angeles County)

Grade Retention Study*

- Anaheim City School District (Orange County)*
- Apple Valley Unified School District (San Bernardino County)
- Bellflower Unified School District (Los Angeles County)*
- Campbell Union Elementary School District (Santa Clara County)
- Downey Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- Elk Grove Unified School District (Sacramento County)
- Exeter Union School District (Tulare County)
- Folsom-Cordova Unified School District (Sacramento County)
- Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- Kernville Union Elementary School District (Kern County)
- Lancaster School District (Los Angeles County)
- Lawndale School District (Los Angeles County)*
- Lennox School District (Los Angeles County)
- Lincoln Unified School District (San Joaquin County)
- Mt. Pleasant School District (Santa Clara County)
- Oak Grove Union Elementary School District (Sonoma County)
- Riverside Unified School District (Riverside County)
- San Rafael City School District (Marin County)
- Vacaville Unified School District (Solano County)
- Wilson Unified School District (Tulare County)

* Districts only in the 1999-2000 pilot are listed with an asterisk.

Local Evaluation Reports: 2000-2001

- Alameda Unified School District (Alameda County)
- Bellevue and Wright School Districts (Sonoma County)
- Chino Valley Unified School District (San Bernardino County)
- Downey Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- John C. Fremont Elementary School (Kern County)
- Glendale Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- Greenfield Union School District (Kern County)
- Hayward Unified School District (Alameda County)
- Lawndale School District (Los Angeles County)
- Lincoln School, Oakland Unified School District (Alameda County)
- Lindsay Unified School District (Tulare County)
- Montalvin Manor Elementary School (Contra Costa County)
- Monrovia Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- William Moreno Jr. High School (Imperial County)
- Newark Unified School District (Alameda County)
- Ontario-Montclair School District (San Bernardino County)
- Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Santa Cruz County)
- City of Pico Rivera and El Rancho Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- Rio Dell Elementary School (Humboldt County)
- Sacramento *START* (Sacramento County)[†]
- San Leandro Unified School District (Alameda County)
- Santa Rosa City Schools (Sonoma County)
- Soledad Unified School District (Monterey County)
- Stockton Parks and Recreation Department and Stockton Unified School District (San Joaquin County)

Local Evaluation Reports: 1999-2000

- Anaheim City School District (Orange County)
- Bakersfield City School District (Kern County)
- Burbank Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- Greenfield Union School District (Kern County)
- Long Beach Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Santa Cruz County)
- Pasadena Unified School District (Los Angeles County)
- San Francisco Unified School District (San Francisco County)
- Tehama County's After School Consortium (Tehama County)
- Vacaville Unified School District (Solano County)

[†] One of the 24 randomly-chosen evaluations was in its first year and began operations late and therefore had insufficient data for inclusion. Sacramento *START* was added as a replacement due to the comprehensiveness of its evaluation reports.